DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 370 087 CS 011 710

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TITLE Physical and Social Contexts for Motivating Reading and Writing. The WRAp Program. Instructional Resource No. 5.
INSTITUTION National Reading Research Center, Athens, GA.; National Reading Research Center, College Park, MD.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 94
CONTRACT 17A20007
NOTE 27p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Class Activities; *Classroom Environment; *Cooperative Learning; Elementary Education; Instructional Innovation; *Literacy; Reading Instruction; *Student Motivation; Teacher Behavior; Writing Instruction
IDENTIFIERS *Reading Motivation; *Writing Contexts

ABSTRACT

Emerging from a series of research studies, the WRAp (Writing and Reading Appreciation) program is designed to motivate reading and writing in the elementary classroom. The WRAp program includes: (1) the design of literacy centers; (2) teacher-modeled activities with children's literature; and (3) a period for independent reading and writing called WRAp Time. Through the use of these physical and social contexts, children are motivated to read and write voluntarily in socially cooperative activities. The cooperative literacy experiences of the program are a challenge for teachers and rewarding for the children. (Contains 23 references and 5 figures listing features of the WRAp program.) (RS)

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Physical and Social Contexts for Motivating Reading and Writing

the WRAP program

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Lesley Mandel Morrow with Muriel K. Rand

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Spring 1994

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Physical and Social Contexts for Motivating Reading and Writing

The WRAp Program

Lesley Mandel Morrow
with
Muriel K. Rand
Rutgers University

INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCE NO. 5
Spring 1994

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The work reported herein was prepared with partial support from the National Reading Research Center of the University of Georgia and University of Maryland. It was supported under the Educational Research and Development Centers Program (PR/AWARD NO. 117A20007) as administered by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education. The findings and opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect the position or policies of the National Reading Research Center, the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, or the U.S. Department of Education.

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Physical and Social Contexts for Motivating Reading and Writing

The WRAp Program

Lesley Mandel Morrow
with
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Rutgers University

National Reading Research Center
Universities of Georgia and Maryland
Instructional Resource No. 5
Spring 1994

This instructional resource describes the social and physical contexts of a literacy program designed to motivate reading and writing. The WRAp (Writing and Reading Appreciation) Program includes (1) the design of literacy centers, (2) teacher-modeled activities with children's literature, and (3) a period for independent reading and writing called WRAp (Writing and Reading Appreciation) Time. Through the use of these contexts, children were motivated to read and write in socially cooperative activities. This article describes successful practices that emerged from a series of research studies by the author (and in collaboration with others) for the purpose of motivating children to read and write and to enhance literacy skills as well.

As educators we are aware of the need to develop strategic readers and writers. We also hope to create individuals who are motivated to read and write voluntarily, both for pleasure and for information (Alvermann & Guthrie, 1993). Let's look at one classroom in which the social and physical contexts established helped motivate cooperative reading and writing.

In Mrs. Colon's second-grade classroom, it was **WRAp**[1] (Writing and Reading Appreciation) Time. WRAp Time is a period during which children engage in reading and writing activities in a collaborative manner, using materials, some of which they make themselves, that are used and stored in a classroom literacy center.

Alex and Neil were sitting comfortably on the carpet, resting against pillows, and sharing a book about snakes. Alex said to Neil, "Yo! Look at this!" as he held out the page for Neil to see. Neil and Alex were fascinated as they continued to read the book. Shawn and Patrick, squeezed tightly into one rocking chair, were also sharing a book. Marcel, Evan, and Tiffany snuggled under a shelf – a private spot filled with stuffed animals – taking turns reading the same book.

Tashiba and Angela decided to tell the story *The Mitten* (Brett, 1989). They worked with a large felt mitten, the prop for that story. Tashiba read the book aloud and Angela placed the animal figures into the mitten in order of their appearance in the story.

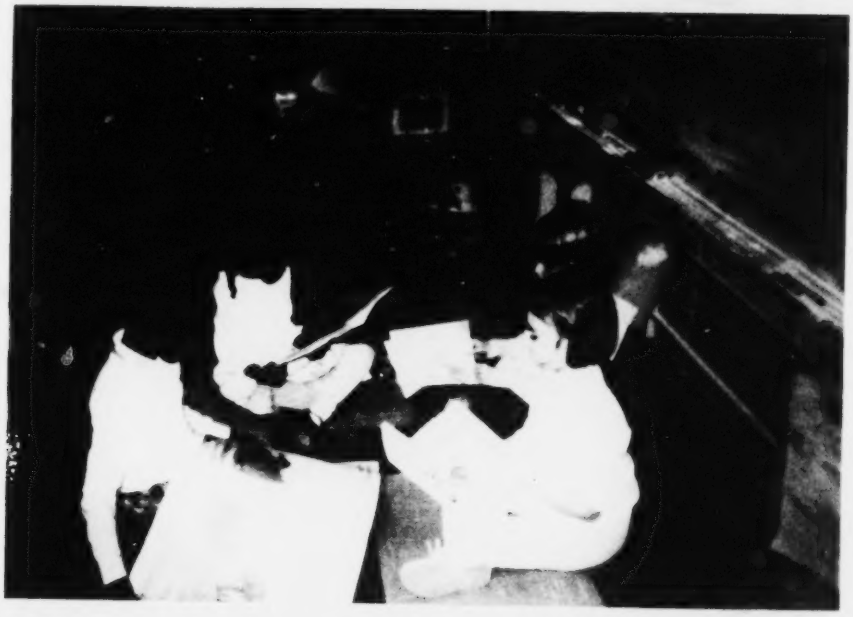

Photo 1. Howard, acting as the teacher, reads to several children from a Big Book during WRAp Time, occasionally stopping to ask who would like a turn to read.

Darren and Ramon chose to use the headsets to listen to a taped story. Halfway through the tape, Darren said, "Wanna read another one after this?" Ramon replied, "Sure!" and they chose *The Principal's New Clothes* (Calmenson, 1989) for their next story. The boys shared the book, the volume control, and the play button while engrossed in the story.

Four girls decided to make a roll movie – a story illustrated on rolled paper – of *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain* (Aardema, 1981). LaToya took the role of leader and assigned the other three girls the following tasks: one was to draw the pictures, one was to write the words, and the other was to assemble the pages.

Several children were checking books out of the classroom library to read at home. They recorded their check-outs on index cards which they placed in a file box provided for this purpose.

Howard read from a Big Book and gave several other children copies of the story he was reading in smaller format. He placed the children in a circle and acted like the teacher as he read to the others while occasionally stopping to ask who would like a turn.

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Mrs. Colon helped one group get started on their WRAp TIME project and then sat down to read her own book, near children who were also reading, on the rug in the literacy center.

The purpose of this instructional resource is to describe the WRAp (Writing and Reading Appreciation) Program, an empirically based mechanism that teachers in kindergarten through fourth grade have used to enhance students' interaction and engagement with reading and writing activities. First, we present the theoretical basis for the WRAp Program. Second, we describe the design and implementation of WRAp (Writing and Reading Appreciation) Time in elementary classrooms. Third, we present the research documenting the efficacy of the WRAp Program. We conclude with a few comments about the adaptation or extension of the WRAp Program in upper elementary grades.

Theoretical Foundation

Our approach to literacy learning will be discussed in detail later; it reflects Holdaway's (1979) theory of developmental learning that is characterized by frequent social interaction with peers and adults in an environment rich with materials that allow for choice. Holdaway emphasizes four processes leading to literacy growth: (1) *observation* of literacy behaviors, such as being read to or seeing peers and teachers engaged in reading and writing, (2) *collaboration and cooperation* through sharing materials and peer tutoring, (3) *practice* that allows children to try out what they have learned, and (4) *performance* by sharing completed reading and writing activities with others. These four processes occur during WRAp Time.

Value of Cooperative Literacy Experience. We know that experience with children's literature helps youngsters develop vocabulary and enhance their background knowledge, thus improving comprehension (Hoffman, Roser, & Farest, 1988; Morrow, 1992). The amount of free reading done by children both inside and out of school correlates with reading achievement (Anderson, Fielding, & Wilson, 1988; Taylor, Frye, & Maruyama, 1990). Children who choose to read voluntarily develop positive attitudes towards reading that last a lifetime (Greaney, 1980).

One of the ways children are motivated to engage in self-directed literacy activities is through peer cooperation. When children work in small groups in which social interactions are cooperative, their achievement and productivity increase (Johnson & Johnson, 1987; Slavin, 1983). Two important factors contribute to the dynamics of cooperative learning: (1) the amount of oral

interaction among students and (2) the heterogeneity of group members (Johnson & Johnson, 1987). These factors allow children to arrive at joint understandings by explaining material to each other and listening to each others' viewpoints. When students function as colleagues for each other, more capable peers learn to synthesize and apply material while providing support to others (Cazden, 1986). According to Dewey (1916), children engaged in task-oriented dialogue with peers reach higher levels of understanding than when teachers present information didactically.

The term *cooperative behavior* in this article refers to children working together on self-selected projects that involve reading and/or writing. Children are expected to remain on task and complete a project before going on to another. They are expected to support and help each other when working together. Children are not however, responsible for the level of performance of others with whom they work (Slavin, 1983).

Design and Implementation

The WRAp Program is the outcome of several research investigations (Morrow, 1992; Morrow, O'Connor, & Smith, 1990; Morrow, Sharkey, & Firestone, 1992; Morrow & Weinstein, 1986). These studies demonstrated the benefits of using children's literature as an important part of the reading instructional program. The investigations also showed the importance of cooperative literacy experiences as a means of motivating children to read and write voluntarily for pleasure and for information. The characteristics of the WRAp Program that have been found to motivate children to read and write include:

- **Choices** – being able to select literacy activities to participate in
- **Social Interaction** – working in socially cooperative settings with peers
- **Responsibility** – carrying out tasks independently, completing tasks to perform and share, and evaluating task performance
- **Success** – feeling that the task at hand is manageable and that the finished task is a success

The contexts also included (1) the creation of well-designed literacy centers in classrooms, (2) teacher-modeled pleasurable literature activities, and (3) time for socially cooperative reading in a period called WRAp Time.

The following sections describe how the physical and social contexts were organized and managed so that cooperative literacy learning occurred.

Designing Literacy Centers for the WRAp Program. Children and teachers collaborated in the creation of the literacy center by deciding where to place it in the classroom, what literacy activities to include, and which books they wanted to have. Children decided where each item was to be stored, so they knew where things belonged. Signs and posters with directions for using materials were created by the children, and it was their responsibility to keep the center neat.

The literacy centers were created to be physically attractive and accessible. They included:

- Pillows, rugs, and a rocking chair to add an element of comfort and softness
- Books that were color coded by categories and place on bookshelves accessible to the children
- Open-faced bookshelving for displaying books about topics being studied, such as social studies or science
- Five to eight books per child at three or four grade levels – books were rotated on and off the shelves regularly
- Different genres of children's literature such as picture storybooks, poetry, informational books, magazines, biographies, fairy tales, novels, realistic literature, cookbooks, and so forth
- A system for checking books out of the classroom library to take home and read
- Logs for recording books read and tasks completed during WRAp Time or other times of the day
- A writing area called the "Author's Spot" with various types of writing paper, booklets, and writing utensils such as markers and pencils for creating original stories and books
- Attractive posters that were designed to focus on the joys and importance of reading and writing and bulletin boards that provided a place for children to display their work
- Manipulatives such as feltboards with characters from a piece of children's literature. Manipulatives made children want to engage in storytelling and provided a means for active involvement. Manipulatives allowed children to make choices based on different interests and learning styles. Manipulatives included were: felt board stories, taped stories with headsets, roll movies, prop stories, puppet stories, and chalk talks.

Figure 1 provides a description of some of the literature manipulatives.

Teacher Modeling of Literature Activities. Teachers attended workshops that included demonstrations of pleasurable literature activities and modeling techniques. During these

Figure 1. Literature Manipulative Materials*

1. **Felt Board Stories** consist of characters from a book made of oak tag or construction paper. They are backed with felt or sandpaper and used when telling a story by displaying them on a felt board. The felt board can be purchased or made by covering cork board, oak tag, or similar surface with flannel or felt.

2. **Taped Stories** include recordings of stories with that children can hear with headsets. They follow along in the accompanying books.

3. **Roll Movies** are stories illustrated on paper that comes on a roll (such as shelving paper). Dowels are inserted into a box with a rectangular cut-out opening. The roll story is taped to the dowels at the top and bottom. The dowels are turned to reveal each scene.

4. **Prop Stories** include a collection of materials for a particular book such as three stuffed bears, three bowls, and a yellow-haired doll for telling the story of *Goldilocks.*

5. **Puppet Stories** use various types of puppets for telling stories such as hand, stick, face, and finger puppets.

6. **Chalk Talks** involve drawing a story on a chalk board or sheet of paper while the story is being read or told.

*(Manipulatives are always accompanied by the story book)

workshops, they made materials for their literacy centers and simulated lessons for children. Handbooks detailing strategies to use in the program were provided for the teachers.[2]

To motivate children's interest in literature and to help them function independently, teachers modeled how to use materials in the literacy center (Morrow & Weinstein, 1986). Every day, teachers read stories and demonstrated literacy manipulatives such as roll movies, taped stories, and puppets. Teachers used story-telling techniques including chalktalks, felt stories, and prop stories to model numerous ways of becoming involved in literature; several activities were performed as partnerships. Children learned how to check books out from the classroom library to take home, and they were taught to record the tasks they had accomplished. Writing activities such as journal writing and creating original

Photo 2. A well-designed literacy center, an inviting area where children can read and write, collaborate, and become actively involved in children's literature.

puppet stories and felt board stories were also included as part of the teacher-guided activities. Modeling of activities continued on a regular basis.

Managing WRAp Time. WRAp Time occurred 3 to 5 times per week for 30 to 45 minutes. Children made decisions about what they would do and whom they would work with. The guidelines for children to follow during WRAp Time were posted and reviewed before each session (see Figure 2).

In addition to rules pertaining to the use of materials, children were taught cooperative skills which they practiced; these were posted as shown in Figure 3. Included in the list of aids to cooperative behavior were helpful things to say to each other, helpful things to do for each other during WRAp Time, and directions for evaluating their cooperative behavior and the completion of tasks.

WRAp Times were focused around a content area theme or specific literacy skill. If the children were learning about plants in science, for example, they focused their reading and writing activities on this topic. Likewise, if the teacher was featuring elements of story structure, the children could be asked to identify the setting, theme, or resolution in the stories they were reading and writing.

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Figure 2. Rules for Using Materials During WRAp Time

1. Decide who you will work with or if you will work alone.
2. Choose a reading or writing activity from the Literacy Center.
3. Do only one or two activities during WRAp TIME.
4. Materials can be used in or outside of the Literacy Center.
5. Be sure that what you do includes reading and writing.
6. Handle the materials carefully.
7. Speak in soft voices – people are working
8. Put materials back in their place before taking more.
9. Try activities you haven't done before.
10. Try working with people you haven't worked with before.
11. Be ready to share your completed tasks with the class.
12. Record completed tasks in your log.
13. Keep the Literacy Center neat.

When WRAp Times were first initiated, some teachers assigned children to groups, decided which activity they were to participate in, and selected the leader to organize the activity. Other teachers had children sign up for activities and groups before the period began. After participating in assigned groups with assigned tasks, children could eventually make these decisions themselves – which was the goal of the program. Children chose people to work with, picked leaders for their groups, and selected tasks to work on. To help children select activities, a list of things to do during WRAp Time was posted in the literacy center (see Figure 4). Task cards containing steps for carrying out the activities helped children organize their work. Figure 5 shows a sample task card.

The purpose of WRAp Time was for children to read and write independently and in a socially cooperative manner. Early in the program, some children moved frequently from one activity to the next. Within a few weeks, most of the children were able to stay with one or two activities for the entire period. Children spent a great deal of time on WRAp Time projects, some of which extended over several days or weeks. When WRAp Time ended for the day and a child had not completed an activity, the project was stored and the child could work on it again later.

Figure 3. Rules for Cooperating in Groups During WRAp Time

Helpful Things To Do When Working In Groups During WRAp Time:

Select a leader to help the group get started.
Give everyone a job.
Share the materials.
Take turns talking.
Listen to your friends when they talk.
Respect what others have to say.
Stay with your group.

Helpful Things To Say When Working In Groups During WRAp Time:

Can I help you?
I like your work.
You did a good job.

Check Your WRAp Time Cooperation and Work:

Did you say helpful things?
Did you help each other?
Did you share materials?
Did you take turns?
Did you all have jobs?
How well did your jobs get done?
What can we do better next time?

Teachers shared manipulative materials and books to increase their availability to children. The children themselves made new materials for the literacy center – taped stories for the listening center, felt board stories, and roll movies for others to use. They bound their original stories into books for the classroom library. Participation in these activities increased their feelings of ownership and respect for the area.

The Role of the Teacher During WRAp Time. Besides preparing the environment and modeling literacy activities, the teacher also played an important role during WRAp Time. The teacher interacted with the children in the following ways: (1) by facilitating or helping activities get started, (2) by scaffolding literacy behaviors when models were needed, (3) by participating with the children in their activities, and (4) by modeling reading and writing for pleasure. The goal for this period, however, was for the children to be self-directed in the activities.

Literacy Skills Developed During WRAp Time

During the research program, extensive information was collected. One investigation produced 130 hours of written field notes and 40 hours of transcribed and analyzed videotapes made during WRAp Time. These observations focused on the activities selected by the children, how they interacted socially, and what literacy learning was taking place (Morrow, 1992; Sharkey, 1992).

Figure 4. Things To Do During WRAp Time

1. Read a book, a magazine, or a newspaper.
2. Read to a friend.
3. Listen to someone read to you.
4. Listen to a taped story and follow the words in the book.
5. Use the felt board with a story book and felt characters.
6. Use the roll movie with its story book.
7. Write a story.
8. Draw a picture about a story you read.
9. Make a story you wrote into a book.
10. Make a felt story for a book you read or a story you wrote.
11. Write a puppet show and perform it for friends.
12. Make a taped story for a book you read or a story you wrote.
13. Record tasks you have completed in logs.
14. Check out books to take home and read.
15. Use Task Cards with directions for the activity you select.

The data showed a variety of literacy activities occurring during these periods. The activities were self-directed and children made decisions about what projects to work on and how to carry through with their plans. Although traditional reading and writing activities took place, children also engaged in active and manipulative projects such as creating felt board stories and puppet presentations. Most activities were done in groups of two to five and involved peer cooperation and peer tutoring. Some groups were single-gender groups; others were mixed. All were generally friendly. Children took charge of their learning; they read aloud as well as silently, and they wrote. Their comprehension development was apparent in many ways.

Oral Reading. During WRAp Time, the children chose to read aloud in pairs, small groups, and alone. They used books, magazines, and newspapers. Oral reading was sometimes accompanied by manipulatives such as roll movies, felt board stories, and puppets. The following description is of a typical incident that occurred during WRAp Time:

Dharmesh and Imran were reading aloud together. They sat on the carpet in the Literacy Center browsing through a newspaper, pointing out interesting things to each other. Imran saw a caption that said, "Cartoons help fight drugs." He read this to Dharmesh and together they named all the cartoon characters on the page who were helping to stop the drug problem.

Figure 5. WRAp Time Task Card

TELL A STORY USING THE FELTBOARD

1. Select a leader for your group.
2. Select a book and the matching felt story characters.
3. Decide who will read and who will use the felt characters.
4. Take turns reading and placing the felt figures on the board.
5. Be ready to present the story to the class.
6. Record the activity in your log.
7. Check your work:
   How well was the story presented?
   How well did the group work together?

Oral reading activities allowed the children time to practice pronunciation, intonation, pacing, and performance – opportunities that may be limited in traditional classroom settings because oral reading can be threatening for readers and tedious for listeners. During WRAp Time, the children chose to read aloud often, and those listening did so voluntarily, which provided a meaningful and supportive context for the child who was reading.

Silent Reading. Schools have typically held periods of sustained silent reading; during such periods, everyone does the same thing at the same time. WRAp Time, on the other hand, provided the choice between silent reading and other literacy activities. Often children would read together curled up on the rug, leaning against pillows or each other, or holding stuffed animals. They also read at their desks, in the rocking chair, in the coat closets, and under tables. Two children read silently while walking slowly around the room. The social and cooperative nature of this setting also allowed for meaningful interactions between children centered around their reading. The following incident was typical of the silent reading observed:

Amber and Jessica were reading silently as they sat next to each other. Amber was reading a riddle book while Jessica read a story book. In the middle of the reading, Amber exclaimed, "Listen to this! What's your favorite rock?" When Jessica did not have an answer, Amber continued, "Rock and roll!" Both girls giggled and went back to reading silently.

Writing. Writing activities were stimulated by the writing materials in the "Author's Spot" and by the children's literature and manipulatives in the center. For example, children created written stories about the pup-

Photo 3. During WRAp Time, the teacher models reading and writing for pleasure and participates in the children's activities.

pets and felt board characters that were available. They also wrote new episodes for stories such as *Clifford Takes a Trip* (Bridwell, 1966), which is one of many books in a series. Writing was based on the children's interests and experiences as well as on current events such as the Persian Gulf War, which was going on at the time that some of these observations were taking place. Children made up episodes for popular television shows such as "The Simpsons" and "In Living Color." They wrote biographies of popular rock stars and then illustrated them with magazine pictures. Writing projects often became performances presented to the class by their creators in the form of puppet shows, roll movies, and plays complete with scenery.

Children wrote in pairs and small groups more often than alone. Writing projects often lasted for the whole period or even over several days, and children worked on their projects all over the classroom, not just in the literacy center. The following is an incident that was typical of narrative writing during WRAp Time:

Lindsey, Chris, and David decided to write a story together and to present it on the felt board. Since the Author's Spot was not large enough to accommodate them, the

Photo 4. Dharmesh and Imran read the newspaper article "Cartoons Help Fight Drugs" and point out characters who are helping to fight the drug problem.

group moved the desks near the writing area together to make a larger work surface. Chris asked who would be the author, and Lindsey immediately replied that she would like the job. The children began their collaboration, taking turns adding to the story and drawing the figures for the felt board.

Teachers expressed surprise during subsequent interviews that children who had never written were choosing to do so. They were also surprised at the children's choice of topics such as the Persian Gulf War, which they would not have thought the children would enjoy as an assignment.

Comprehension. During WRAp Time, children demonstrated understanding of what they read by reconstructing information from the text. Literal comprehension was demonstrated when children could express explicitly stated story details in oral comments, in writing, or by drawing pictures. This can be seen in the following incident:

Elvira and Chalana were doing a roll movie of *Where the Wild Things Are* (Sendak, 1983). Chalana told the story as Elvira rolled the paper in the roll movie box to the next scene. Chalana remembered the dialogue from the story and was able to re-

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trieve and sequence information as the movie was rolled.

Inferential comprehension requires children to think beyond the text by understanding characters' feelings, predicting outcomes, or putting themselves in a character's place. During WRAp Time, the children extended their understanding of stories to include ideas that were not stated explicitly:

Neil and Alex were working on a book together. While Neil drew the illustrations, he began to make inferences and predictions about the pictures. He said, "I want this picture to look like the ladybug is in love with the mosquito." Alex and Neil then discussed how they would write the text to include ideas about why the ladybug would be in love with such a greedy mosquito and what would happen to her in this situation.

Critical comprehension requires hypothesizing, analyzing, judging, and drawing conclusions. This level of thinking entails making comparisons and separating fact from fiction. One important way that WRAp Time contributed to critical comprehension was through the process of self-questioning during children's use of the manipulatives. They questioned themselves about how information was organized, how to relate parts of the text to one another, and how to relate the text to their background experience. Their self-questioning lead to self-directed literacy learning as seen in the following episode:

Tarene and A.J. had been reading *Stone Soup* (McGovern, 1968) to each other when A.J. commented, "Did you hear what this guy said? I can make soup from a stone!" A.J. shook his head with an expression of disbelief and said, "You can't make soup from a stone. Those soldiers fooled them!"

In self-directed activities during WRAp Time, children used comprehension skills frequently. Few of these incidents took place in the presence of the teacher and none involved a lesson with comprehension questions prepared by the teacher. When interviewed, children said that during WRAp Time they learned new words and learned to understand what they were reading.

Assessing the WRAp Program

Assessment of the success of the WRAp Program and in particular Wrap Time was conducted on a regular basis. Teachers met to discuss the physical design of their centers and how they could be improved. They shared new ideas for using literature and learned from each other. They discussed how, for example, to help children who were not on task, to encourage different

children to work together, to help children try different tasks, and to see that everyone had a leadership role at some time. The opportunity for teachers to meet provided them with social support, helped them evaluate the program, and helped build their confidence and skill as well.

During WRAp Time, teachers observed their classes to see which children were on task, which children needed help getting started, and which activities the children were choosing or not choosing. Teachers then changed their literacy centers to help increase students' productivity. For example, teachers moved centers from one area of the room to another if they found a space that was bigger, brighter, or quieter. They added materials such as books and manipulatives, so children had more choices. They changed the management of WRAp Time, if necessary, to enhance productivity.

Along with recording anecdotes about activities, teachers collected writing samples, and made audiotapes and videotapes of the groups at work as well as of their performances of completed tasks. Teachers involved the children in evaluating their own WRAp Time activities. Children discussed how well they cooperated and what they thought of the quality of their completed tasks. When children presented completed tasks to the class, peers offered constructive criticism. Children made suggestions for improving the program and identified materials and books they wanted added to the literacy centers.

Research Investigations on the Literature Program

The program described evolved as a result of several research studies (Morrow, 1992; Morrow, O'Connor, & Smith, 1990; Morrow, Sharkey, & Firestone, 1994; Morrow & Weinstein, 1986). The children in the studies were from school districts with diverse populations. One study took place in an urban district where 95% of the children were African American and Latino and came from middle-class and disadvantaged homes. Another study was conducted in an urban district, where 40% of the population was White, 30% African American, 20% Latino, and 10% Asian. The socioeconomic background of the children in this setting was middle class. A third study was conducted in a suburban setting where participants were primarily White children from middle- to upper-middle class socioeconomic backgrounds (Morrow, 1992; Morrow, O'Connor, & Smith, 1990; Morrow & Weinstein, 1986). Teachers in these schools had not used children's literature or social cooperative settings as a major part of their literacy programs. We worked in these districts because the teachers and

administrators were interested in implementing literature programs. All of the districts, however, wanted moderate changes, and wanted to continue using their basal materials. The programs that were implemented represented only a portion of the total literacy instruction.

The children in the classrooms where the program was implemented were compared to children in control groups where reading instruction was guided entirely by basal materials. In the classrooms using children's literature and WRAp Time, basals were also used but to a lesser extent than in the comparison rooms. This was done to make periods of reading instruction the same length in all classes. The children in the classrooms that promoted cooperative literacy experiences performed better than children in the basal-only classrooms on tests of comprehension, story rewriting, and story retelling. These children also improved in their creation of original oral and written stories and showed an increase in vocabulary development and syntactic complexity. Children in the treatment classrooms demonstrated more interest in reading and writing on the motivation measures and in their class behavior (Morrow, 1992).

The findings of these investigations demonstrate that children should have the opportunity to work with literature in social cooperative settings. By doing so, they learn to function independently of the teacher, to direct and choose their own activities, and to use cooperative skills. Children also have the opportunity to practice what they have learned in other literacy lessons and become voluntary readers and writers.

In summary, in the classrooms that implemented The WRAp Program, the environment had a strong impact on the children's learning and behavior. The time children spent working together to prepare the physical space in the classroom was crucial in promoting cooperation. Children needed guidance in learning how to use the materials, make decisions, and function independently. This preparation time ensured smooth classroom management and the voluntary use of literature (Good & Brophy, 1987; Morrow & Weinstein, 1986).

CONCLUSION

The value of providing social cooperative experiences when using children's literature can be seen in the literacy learning that occurred during WRAp Time. Teachers commented that there seemed to be something for everyone in this setting, whether children excelled in literacy behavior or had difficulty with reading and writing. Children with special needs were also reported to be productively engaged in literacy activities during WRAp Time.

The social and physical contexts of the program – the literacy centers, teacher-modeled literature activities, and writing and reading appreciation times – motivated children to read and write voluntarily.

The work described in this Instructional Resource was done in kindergartens through fourth grade. Teachers have since adapted the program for children in the upper elementary grades. Adaptation simply meant selecting children's literature that was age and grade appropriate, designing the literacy centers with posters and displays suitable for older students, and selecting tasks for cooperative learning that were challenging and enjoyable for fifth- through eighth-graders.

The cooperative literacy experiences described here were a challenge for those teachers who implemented the strategies and were rewarding for the children who participated in them.

AUTHOR NOTES

[1] The name WRAp Program (Writing and Reading Appreciation Program) was coined by Gloria Lettenberger, an ESL teacher in the program from the New Brunswick Public Schools.

[2] The handbooks used by the teachers – Morrow, L.M. (1992), *Super Tips for Storytelling*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Reprographics, and Morrow, L.M. (1990), *Motivating Reading and Writing: A Curriculum Handbook* – are available from the Rutgers University Bookstore, Ferren Mall, 1 Penn Plaza, New Brunswick, NJ 08901.

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